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SUBJECT: MISSILE DEFENSE: ANSWERS PROVIDED TO RUSSIAN
QUESTIONS ON U.S. PLANS

REF: USNATO 0133

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: This cable provides answers to 11 written questions on U.S. Missile Defense (MD) plans, drafted by the Russian Mission to NATO, which were answered by Lt Gen Obering, Director, Missile Defense Agency, at a NATO-Russia Council meeting on February 28, 2007. While the Russian questions cover a wide range of topics, particular emphasis was made on the following areas: the threat of ballistic missile attacks on European territory, missile debris, the desire for increased dialogue and cooperation between NATO, the U.S. and the Russian Federation on missile defense, and the scale and capabilities of the proposed U.S. system. USNATO provided the following written responses (cleared by Lt Gen Obering) to the Russian Mission on March 2, 2007. Posts may wish to draw from these questions and answers in their MD discussions with host capitals. End Summary

¶2. (SBU) In the U.S. view, what is the current level of probability of missile attacks on the territory of European countries?

The uncertainty of when an attack will occur is great, but the proliferation of long-range missiles is certain. Security for these missiles is questionable and this lack of security raises the risk that non-state actors could strike or threaten Europe.

¶3. (SBU) Which parts of Europe will be covered by a European site?

All European countries within range of a long-range missile attack from Iran, including a portion of north-western Russia, will be covered. Short-range systems fielded by individual countries, or as a part of a NATO theatre defense capability, would protect against intermediate and short-range attacks. There exists the opportunity to collaborate on the development of a long-range defense system that would cover the part of Russia that will not be covered by a U.S. system.

¶4. (SBU) Does the U.S. side have any plans to continue such meetings as the one we are having today, at the level of missile defense experts from the capitals?

Yes. We propose scheduling such meetings in the April-May 2007 timeframe, to include a simulation-based "war-game" to deepen the experts' understanding of the U.S. missile defense system's capabilities, limitations, and operational considerations, such as command and control.

¶5. (SBU) Has the U.S. analyzed possible risks for the European NATO nations emerging as a result of the U.S. missile defense installation, its deployment in Europe which may be attractive to terrorists?

Missile defense sites are highly secure. In addition, they are attended by a relatively small cadre of operational, maintenance, and security personnel, making them less attractive targets for terrorists.

¶6. (SBU) Can the U.S. guarantee that Russian territory and the Kaliningrad region in particular, will not be exposed to the falls of debris of the U.S. missile defense system interceptors and engaged missiles?

Debris associated with the intercept of an Iranian long-range missile attack on the U.S. would not fall on Russian territory. Debris from the intercept of an Iranian long-range missile attack on Europe could fall on Russian territory, but the probability of that debris causing death among the civilian population is very low. It should be noted that boosters from an Iranian long-range missile system aimed at the U.S. are highly likely to fall on Russian territory.

¶7. (SBU) Is there any concept for the U.S. missile defense elements deployment in other European countries? Can the U.S. determine at present the maximal quantity of the interceptors and C2 systems that might be deployed to Europe?

As briefed to the NATO-Russia Council in November 2006 as well as at this NRC meeting, the U.S. concept for deploying a European missile defense capability includes 10 interceptors based in Poland, a mid-course tracking radar based in the Czech Republic, and transportable cueing radar forward-based in the Caucasus region. There will be a small amount of C2 equipment collocated with the interceptors and the radar, but the main C2 elements will remain in the U.S.

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¶8. (SBU) Are there any plans to invite European countries to the research and scientific works to create MD elements of the European site?

The systems to be fielded as part of the European sites are non-developmental, so there will not be an opportunity for European commercial participation in research or scientific activities per se. However, we expect the vast majority of the site preparation and construction activities to be accomplished by European companies operating as subcontractors to Boeing, the prime contractor for the U.S. long-range system.

¶9. (SBU) Considering the time limitations of the ballistic missiles engagement operations, who and where will take appropriate decisions on the combat use of the U.S. assets in Europe?

Because of the short timelines associated with missile defense engagements, the U.S. system is designed to operate largely autonomously with man-in-the-loop supervision. The U.S. will collaborate with those nations that both host the sites and are protected by them, in the development of pre-established rules of engagement (known as Execution Plans) that govern the operation of the system.

¶10. (SBU) What will be the legal status of the U.S. European missile defense installations?

The installations will remain sovereign territory of the hosting nation. The missile defense equipment deployed on the installations will remain the property of the U.S. Additional legal details will be the subject of negotiations between the U.S. and the hosting nations.

¶11. (SBU) Does the U.S. intend to support the NRC TMD cooperation project?

The U.S. continues to support the concept of a NATO-Russia theatre missile defensive capability that compliments the

long-range defensive coverage provided by the U.S. system.

¶12. (SBU) Has the U.S. or NATO studied the consequences of the European site deployment as a prerequisite for missile programs in other countries? Creation of shorter and intermediate range missiles specially designed to overcome MD elements?

The U.S. long-range ballistic missile defense system is aimed at the &rogue nation8 threat. We do not believe they will have the capability to field such sophisticated capabilities in the near term. We would encourage those countries that do possess the wherewithal to field more advanced offensive capabilities to instead focus on fielding defensive capabilities.

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